

GRAVEYARDS AMONG US

Just west of the future Lake Highlands Town Center (70 acres of planned development) rest the bones of about 150 people at Fields Cemetery, named for one of Dallas' first black families. Most Lake Highlands residents are accustomed to driving past this Skillman graveyard, so it doesn't feel scary — more like a fascinating little swath of history.

But it is a little tougher to get past a cemetery that is practically in your backyard, especially if you're an imaginative kid. That's the case for residents of Estate Lane, east of Audelia, where McCree Cemetery is situated between an apartment complex and a neighborhood of single-family homes.

"I remember thinking that the graveyard was haunted," says Trisha Stroud, who grew up on Estate. "It is all graves from the 1800s ... it freaked me out."

Indeed, those graves date back to the mid-19th century.



Here at McCree Cemetery, there are about 300 plots — blacks on one side and whites on the other. Among the latter is Dinah Jackson, 1831-1908. A newspaper clipping from 1908 states that she was one of Dallas' earliest settlers and that her family was "one of the best known in the county," adding that her funeral was one of the best attended in Dallas history. According to Francis James, renowned for her expertise in Dallas cemeteries, the Jackson family built and owned a general store near Forest-Audelia.

The McCree Cemetery, tucked away behind a residential street, is the final resting place for many of Dallas' early residents, including Dinah Jackson [pictured], who died in 1908 and whose funeral, according to her obituary, was one of the best attended in the city's history.